ROCK ME TO SLEEP.

BY MRS. AKERS.

Backward, turn backward, O Time in your flight,
Make me a child again, just for to-night!
Mother, come back from that echoless shore,
Take me again to your heart as of yore—
Kiss from my forehead the furrows of care,
Smooth the few silver threads out of my hair;
Over my slumbers your loving watch keep—
Rock me to sleep, mother—rock me to sleep!

Backward, fly backward, O tide of the years!
I am so weary of toil and of tears—
Toil without recompense, tears all in vain—
Take them and give me my childhood again!
I have grown weary with dust and decay,
Weary of flinging my soul-wealth away—
Weary of sowing for others to reap—
Rock me to sleep, mother—rock me to sleep!

Tired of the hollow, the base the untrue:
Mother, O mother, my heart calls for you!
Many a summer the grass has grown green,
Blossomed and faded our faces between,
Yet with strong yearning and possionate pain,
Long I to-night for your presence again:
Come from the silence so long and so deep—
Rock me to sleep, mother—rock me to sleep!

Over my heart in the days that are flown:
No love like mother love ever has shone—
No other worship abides and endures,
Faithful, unselfish and patient like yours—
None like a mother can charm away pain
From the sick soul and world-weary brain;
Slumber's soft calm o'er my heavy lids creep—
Rock me to sleep, mother—rock me to sleep!

Come, let your brown hair just lighted with gold,
Fall on your shoulders again as of old—
Let it drop over my forehead to-night,
Shading my faint eyes away from the light!
For, with its sunny-edged shadows once more,
Haply will throng the sweet visions of yore;
Lovingly, softly, its bright billows sweep—
Rock me to sleep, mother—rock me to sleep!

Mother, dear mother, the years have been long
Since last I listened your lullaby song,
Sing then, and unto my soul it shall seem
Womanhood's years have been only a dream
Clasped to your heart in a loving embrace,
With your light lashes just sweeping my face;
Never hereafter to wake or to weep—
Rock me to sleep, mother—rock me to sleep!

A WORK-WOMAN'S FORTUNE.

By a Retired Lawyer.

I was called to the jail in C——, one evening, to confer with a client whose trial came on in a day or two; and as I passed the half dozen cells between the inner door of the prison and the apartment where my patron was confined, I caught sight of the troubled but handsome face of a young woman, who sat leaning against the iron bars of one of the little rooms, and I halted for an instant to look at her.

She shrank away timidly to the rear of the cell, however, and I had the opportunity simply to observe that she bore, in her general contour, the traces of a poor "unfortunate," in the usual acceptation of that unfortunate term.

I concluded the interview with my client in a few moments, and just befor leaving him, I inquired:

"Who is your neighbor, yonder?"

"The young woman?" he asked in a whisper.

"Yes—next door."

"I do not know," he replied.

"How long has she been here?" I asked.

"Since yesterday only," he added.

"What is she here *for*?"

"I do not know that, either. I only observe that she weeps and sobs almost incessantly, and has in vain applied to the deputy, who passes up and down this corridor, to learn why she is confined here."

"The old story," I suggested. "A repentant—too late."

"Perhaps so," rejoined my client. "Or it may be a case of oppression, hardship, injustice—"

"She certainly is very pretty," I added, "and really looks too *poorly tidy* to be a criminal.

"I have not seen her," he added. "Why don't you speak with her, as you go out?" he inquired interrogatively.

"She shuns observation," I said "and does not seem desirous to communicate with a stranger, I judge."

"Naturally enough," responded my client. "And this indicates that she may not be so bad as her present position here might lead one to suspect, perhaps."

"Good-night," I replied. "I will stop as I pass out."

And turning away from the young man's cell, I halted again before the door of the girl's apartment, and accosted her.

"Good-evening, Miss," I ventured, in a friendly tone.

She was sitting upon the side of her little low bed, away from the barred grating, and for an instant she did not answer. Then, rising and coming timorously towards me, she asked, in a gentle way, "Who *is* it?"

"I am a stranger to you, Miss," I answered. "I had occasion to call upon your next door neighbor professionally to-night. I am his legal attorney. I saw you as I passed, and—though it is not my habit to do so—I could not resist the impulse to ask you if I could be of service to you. Have you any counsel engaged?"

"No, sir—no," she replied with a sigh.

"Will you permit me, then, to inquire what brings you here?"

"Poverty and misfortune, sir."

"Not crime?"

"Oh no, sir! On my honor, no," she exclaimed, with singular earnestness and candor. And then her tears flowed copiously, as she briefly recounted the circumstances of her hard case, and present peril.

"I do not know," she continued, precisely who I am in this place. Is it not a *prison*, sir," she inquired, artlessly.

"Yes, Miss."

"But I have not been accused. I have had no trial. I have never been in court even at all."

"When did you come here?"

"Yesterday."

"What are the allegations made against you?"

"That I cannot explain. I do not know, sir. I am very poor and entirely friendless. I am a seamstress. I have been compelled for several years to toil very hard, sir, to support myself and an invalid younger brother, with my needle; and the scanty pay we women can command for such labor, as you know, is but a miserable pittance at the best.

"Yes," I said, "I am aware of this."

"We occupied an attic room," she continued, "in a remote part of the city, and I had struggled along, and kept soul and body together, as well as providing for the needs of my poor brother, untll up to a week ago; when, yesterday morning, I overheard confused talk in the story below us which was occupied by some rude people—for persons in our humble position cannot choose the position in which we may 'stay,' you know, sir—and I soon learned that some goods had been purloined by certain parties suspected there, and the premises were being searched by officers.

"A portion of the missing goods was found there, and four or five persons were arrested as being concerned in the affair. I was simply a passing looker on at the moment of the trouble, and was astounded, when the others were called upon to accompany the officials, to find that they insisted on taking me with them!

"I remonstrated in vain. My poor little invalid brother must starve, if they do not care for him, sir. And all I have been able to learn, in my extremity, is, that I must 'give bail.' What is it to give bail, sir, if you please?"

"Security for your appearance at court, Miss," I replied.

"But how? In what way?"

"Some friend must recognize to the authorities in a required sum, to forfeit, should you disappear, or attempt to evade a trial or examination," I informed her.,

"For what? What have I done, sir?"

"That is precisely what I would like now to learn, Miss," I said. "But if you are accused, even, you must give the bail or be detained."

Her handsome countenance fell at this remark, and she said, after a moment's hesitation, "I have no friend on earth to do this, sir. No friend to call upon, none whatever!"

"It is late," I replied, "and a night of rest will do you no harm now, Miss. Be of good cheer. I will examine into your case before I sleep; and at an early hour in the morning you shall see me again. Good night, Miss, and rest quietly with the assurance that I will do what is in my power to serve you, and promptly."

She stared upon me with her great, flashing eyes, evidently not clearly comprehending my good intentions; and I departed with the impression, if she were a guilty person, that she certainly was the most innocent looking one I had for a long time seen. On my way out I inquired at the jail-office who she was.

"What number?" inquired the grouty Deputy, roughly.

"Number thirteen, south wing," I said.

"A woman?" he added, briefly.

"Yes; she came in yesterday.

"Oh—ah—yes. One of a gang o' shop-lifters. Five on 'em in all. Number thirteen's Mary Howell. The rest give bail."

"And are all the others released?" I asked.

"In coorse they air. *She'd* 'a gone too, on'y she couldn't give no s'curity, you see."

I left the prison with an unusually heavy heart. On further inquiry outside, I ascertained that the invalid boy had been taken care of temporarily; and subsequently I learned the following particulars of this curious, but not very uncommon case of hardship and wrong.

Oliver Howell had lived, twenty years before, in a fine house in a fashionable quarter of the city, in affluent circumstances. The fire of '35 beggared hundreds of men of fortune, and Howell among the unlucky number.

He had two children—a daughter and a crippled son. The mother died, and then the father. The children were left to the cold charity of relatives, who threw them off their hands at the earliest convenient opportunity; and the girl found herself, at sixteen, alone in the world, with the encumbrance of her sick brother on her hands, whom she never forsook or neglected.

After trying various experiments, she obtained needle-work, and contrived to keep herself and brother alive, in the attic room of a poor house in an obscure part of the town; and the wolf had been kept from the door until she was suddenly torn from her garret by the officers, who arrested all they could find at hand, and was charged with being accessory to the robbery mentioned.

She had never associated with these persons in any manner whatever, nor did she know anything of their character. She supposed them to be poor like herself, and she had no occasion to inquire as to anybody's reputation. She had little leisure—heaven help her!—to look into the affairs of others. But the police seized her, and she was a prisoner.

I rose at an earlier hour than usual the next morning, and made my appearance at the chambers of Judge S——. I stated the case briefly to him, and expressed my surprise that a woman should have been thus detained in a prison cell, for eight-and-forty hours, upon suspicion, without a hearing. He said it was not uncommon. There was a vast deal of crime transpiring constantly and the innocent sometimes suffered with, or even *for*, the guilty. He would give this case his early attention; which, fortunately for Mary, was soon righted, as it eventuated.

Upon reaching the jail, I found Mary awaiting me anxiously, but evidently greatly relieved in mind, as I gave her "good-morning."

"I am happy to see you, sir," she said, pleasantly. "But I have most unexpectedly found a friend, since you were here last night."

"I am glad to know it, Mary," I responded.

"I should rather say, sir, properly, that he has found me, however. And it is one whom I supposed had forgotten me, long ago."

"Who has called, Mary?"

"The last person I expected to see, sir," she added. "I had not seen him for many months, and had no sort of claim upon him, sir. It was William Edson, a discarded lover, sir."

"Indeed!" I exclaimed. "Then you have one friend, at least. And he appears to be one in your need."

"He is just gone, sir. He is able and will furnish the necessary bail for me at once."

"This is well, Mary, but I think you will have no occasion for it. I have represented your case in the proper quarter, and I think an order for your release will shortly be here."

And so it turned out, an hour afterwards.

I had the pleasure of seeing Mary discharged, a very happy being, without further trouble. A carriage waited at the door, into which young Edson placed her, and they rode away in excellent spirits.

Mary sought out her sick brother at once, and under Edson's advice, she forthwith exchanged her old quarters for more acceptable lodgings. It seemed that although Mary had discarded Edson a year before, when he had made pretentions to her, he persisted in looking after her, and had that day made inquiries for her, and learned of her unfortunate misadventure.

He hastened to the prison, where the young woman quickly explained every thing, and he lost no time in getting her relieved—though his proffered aid in this instance was not needed, as it proved.

He, however, again proffered her his hand, and I was gratified at learning, a few month's subsequently, that Mary Howell became Mrs. William Edson; and that she proved a faithful wife to one of the best of husbands, though he did find her, at last, in the cell of a jail!

The White House.

Washington Correspondence.

The White House is the greatest residence in America. It has cost more money than the Stewart mansion on Fifth avenue, New York; or, with its rebuilding, refurnishing, etc., about $1,700,000. The original cost in 1792, was about $330,000; it was begun in that year, occupied in 1800, rebuilt in 1815, reoccupied in 1818, and its porticos completed as late as 1829. The east room was finished only fifty years ago. Every one of our presidents, except Washington, has lived in this great house, and he has poked his horse's head into its portal to look up at the workmen plastering on the scaffold. An Irish architect named Heber, direct from Dublin via Charleston, took the award of five hundred dollars for the design, and he built and rebuilt it, and lies buried in the Catholic cemetery here, and his descendants are respectable lawyers and citizens of the place. A building for a private residence of one hundred and seventy feet front by sixty-eight feet deep, with one room in it eighty by forty, may yet attract republican attention; its vestibule within the front door is alone fifty by forty feet. Twenty acres of garden and park immediately enclose it, and, on either side, each separated by only four hundred and fifty feet, are buildings which cost seven to twelve millions apiece; yet in all its apparent antiquity, how new. The lawn is still a naked plain, reaching off to the Potomac, like a desert coming to the palace stairs. Like Versailles, in the time of Louis XIV., Washington is a government creation, and this White House is hoary only by events. The president's office, which is in the second story, is also the cabinet room, and is not a very large apartment for the White House, although about thirty-five or forty feet in depth, by, perhaps, thirty feet wide, and with a high ceiling. A long table is in the middle of the floor, with leather-seated chairs around it; the two windows have long lambrequin curtains of a dark, bluish gray color. A large map of the United States is on the wall. The carpet is of a red tint, with large figures. The general effect of the room as one enters is that of a library without books.